

A resolution

adopted by *The City Council*
of the *City of Chicago, Illinois*



Presented by MAYOR RICHARD M. DALEY on APRIL 14, 2010

Whereas, It is with profound sadness and an overwhelming sense of loss that the Members of this Chamber mourn the death, on April 10, 2010, of the President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński and First Lady Maria Kaczyńska in a plane crash that claimed the lives of 96 persons as they traveled to a ceremony commemorating the Katyn Forest massacre, one of Poland's greatest national wartime tragedies; and

WHEREAS, In a cruel twist of fate, the airplane carrying President Kaczyński and his entourage to their final destination at Smolensk in western Russia ran aground in thick fog a short distance from Katyn, where in 1940 more than 20,000 members of Poland's elite officer corps were executed by Soviet secret police and placed in unmarked graves; and

WHEREAS, The tragedy wrought by this peacetime loss of Polish intellectuals and leaders was compounded by its timing. This unimaginable turn of events coincided with Russia's decision to publicly acknowledge the slaughter that Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin ordered at the Katyn Forest during World War II, and to join Polish leaders for the first time at ceremonies commemorating the anniversary of the massacre that has divided these two nations for seven decades; and

WHEREAS, A distinguished statesman who was admired worldwide for his tireless commitment to advancing freedom and human dignity, as a young man President Kaczyński joined his Nation's anti-communist struggle and, as an adult, devoted his own illustrious political career to shaping Poland's inspiring and dramatic post-war transformation into a strong and resilient democracy; and

WHEREAS, Along with President Kaczyński and his charming and talented wife Maria, an economist and well-loved role model for the Polish people, this tragic event claimed the lives of many of Poland's highly respected leadership elite; and

Among the dead were Ryszard Kaczorowski, the leader of Poland's government in exile during the Communist era; Jerzy Szmajdziński, the deputy speaker of Poland's Parliament, Władysław Stasiak, the head of the president's chancellery; Aleksander Szczygło, the head of the National Security Bureau; Andrzej Kremer, the deputy minister of foreign affairs; Franciszek Gągor, the chief of the general staff of the Polish Army; Sławomir Skrzypek, the president of Poland's national bank; Janusz Kochanowski, the commissioner for civil rights protection; Anna Walentynowicz, the woman whose dismissal from the famed Gdansk shipyard sparked the labor uprising that ultimately toppled Poland's communist regime; several members of Poland's Parliament and many other highly valued members of President Kaczyński's inner circle; and

WHEREAS, The devastating loss sustained by Poland, the United States and the world touched Chicagoans in a particularly hard and poignant way. Along with World War II veterans and surviving relatives of the victims of the Katyn Massacre, on board the aircraft was Chicagoan Wojciech Seweryn, who led the construction of a beautiful sculpture dedicated last year to the victims of the Katyn massacre at St. Adalbert cemetery in Niles, Illinois. Mr. Seweryn's work, which depicts the Virgin Mary holding a dying soldier in front of a cross and granite eagle wings, is a lasting testament in the United States to the thousands of Polish victims murdered at the Katyn Forest, including Mr. Seweryn's own father, who held his infant son in a Polish hospital the day he was born and never saw him again; and

WHEREAS, Words cannot convey the depth of pain and emotion felt by Chicago's Polish community and all of our citizens upon learning of the extent of Poland's loss, which has silenced, in death, so many members of that proud Nation's leadership and potent human symbols of Poland's oftentimes tragic history; and

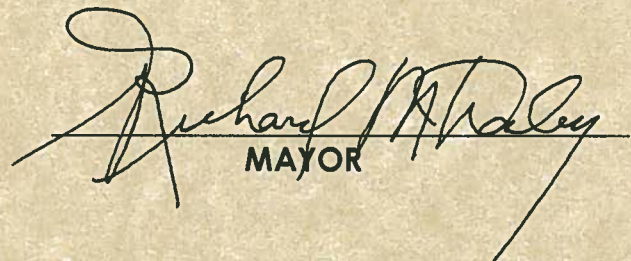
WHEREAS, Poland's loss of President Lech Kaczyński will continue to touch Chicagoans in an especially heartfelt way. True friends of Chicago, President Kaczyński and his wife had planned to visit Chicago from April 29th to May 1st of this year to attend Polish Constitution Day festivities in Chicago and to march with Mayor Daley and other Chicago dignitaries in the City's annual Polish Constitution Day Parade; and


WHEREAS, The citizens of Chicago stand by the people of Poland in their hour of national grief to mourn the loss of the President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński, First Lady Maria Kaczyńska and all of the other remarkable persons who perished on April 10, 2010; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this fourteenth day of April, 2010, do hereby honor the life and memory of the President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński and his wife, First Lady of Poland Maria Kaczyńska and all of the other victims of this deeply sad event; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the Polish Consul General Zygmunt Matynia for transmittal to the Polish government and the surviving members of the Kaczyński family, as well as to the surviving members of the family of Chicagoan Wojciech Seweryn, as a sign of our sympathy and abiding good wishes.




MAYOR


CITY CLERK